

Message Text

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FM AMCONSUL HALIFAX

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1082

INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

UNCLAS HALIFAX 261

E.O.11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, CA

SUBJ: POSTMASTER BRYCE MACKASEY IN HALIFAX SPEAKS
ABOUT POSSIBLE POSTAL STRIKE

1. ON JULY 17 IN INTERVIEW WHICH RECEIVED WIDE MEDIA COVERAGE POSTMASTER GENERAL MACKASEY SAID THAT LABOR STABILITY WILL RETURN TO THE POST OFFICE ONLY WHEN THE CANADIAN UNION OF POSTAL WORKERS (CUPW) GETS RID OF ITS PRESENT NATIONAL LEADERSHIP. HE SAID OFFICIALS OF THE UNION HAVE BEEN DECEPTIVE, IRRESPONSIBLE AND DISHONEST IN THEIR ACTIVITIES, PARTICULARLY IN THE ISSUE INVOLVING SUSPENSIONS GIVEN TO WORKERS IN MONTREAL.

2. MACKASEY SAID THAT ON THREE OCCASIONS LEADERS HAVE FAILED TO APPEAR ON BEHALF OF SUSPENDED WORKERS AT MEETINGS ARRANGED WITH THE DEPUTY POSTMASTER GENERAL SO THAT THE SUSPENSION GRIEVANCES COULD BE DISCUSSED. (FIFTY-FIVE SUSPENSIONS WERE HANDED OUT AND 25 WORKERS FIRED AS A RESULT OF WORK STOPPAGES IN MONTREAL SOME TIME AGO).

3. ACCORDING TO MACKASEY IT WAS APPARENT THAT THE AVERAGE POSTAL WORKER ACROSS THE COUNTRY WAS NOT AWARE OF THE DISHONESTY PRACTISED BY POSTAL LEADERS.

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4. THE POSTMASTER GENERAL SAID THAT THE CUPW MEMBERS COULD HAVE HAD VIRTUALLY THE SAME CONTRACT AS THAT ACCEPTED BY THE LETTER CARRIERS UNION LAST MAY. THEY COULD HAVE HAD THE CONTRACT IF UNION LEADERS HAD BARGAINED IN GOOD FAITH. HOWEVER, A CONTRACT FOR POSTAL WORKERS ACROSS THE COUNTRY HAS BEEN DELAYED BY THE HISTORICALS OF THE MONTREAL LOCAL. MACKASEY SAID THAT THE NATIONAL NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE IS DOMINATED BY MEMBERS OF THE MONTREAL LOCAL AND AS A RESULT THEY ARE ABLE TO TIE UP CONTRACT TALKS.

5. MACKASEY PREDICTED THAT SHOULD WE GET INTO A STRIKE, IT WILL BE A LONG ONE, PERHAPS TWO MONTHS. HE SAID THAT IF THE CUPW STRIKES EVEN ON A ROTATING

BASIS HE WILL CLOSE THE POST OFFICE COMPLETELY DOWN FROM ONE END OF THE COUNTRY TO THE OTHER

. HE SAID

THE POSTAL WORKERS ARE STILL DEMANDING A 30 HOUR WEEK AND A 71 PERCENT WAGE INCREASE. HE SAID HELL WILL FREEZE OVER BEFORE THEY GET THAT FROM US.

6. MACKASEY SAID THAT THE INTRODUCTION OF AUTOMATION INTO CONTRACT TALKS WAS A NON-ISSUE AND WAS BEING USED BY UNION LEADERS TO FRIGHTEN THE GENERAL MEMBERSHIP INTO BELIEVING THAT THERE COULD BE MASS LAYOFFS. ON THE CONTRARY, HE SAID, THEIR JOB SECURITY IS THE BEST ANYWHERE.

7. MACKASEY WAS IN HALIFAX IN CONNECTION WITH A PROMOTIONAL EFFORT FOR THE OLYMPIC COIN ART DISPLAY. MANBEY

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